



New or a Potential Military Rider?

By: Donald Borkoski

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THE RULES:

If you are active or reserve military and you ride a motorcycle, on public or government roadways as personal or duty transportation, you **must notify your command that you ride or intend to ride**. Your command will help you **attend the required basic rider course prior to you operating that vehicle**. The motorcycle safety course is an integral part of your military training and it should be **provided to you at no cost¹**. **You will not be charged leave when you attend**. In some cases you will be provided *training orders*, but in all cases, the training will be considered your official *place-of-duty* and **you are expected to be on time and attend all sessions**. The training is available at most major installations and is provided during daylight business hours. The installation where you attend may not be a naval installation, but all military service installations that provide the training use the same curriculum and certification. If you are attending this course while assigned to a military school, or you work during evening shifts, you may be required to attend the class on weekends or non-working hours. You **should not be assigned duties** while attending the class and compensation should be made so that **your work day will not exceed 12-hours including class time**, the day prior, during and after training days. This class is physically demanding and you should be well rested prior to attending.

You may schedule training on your own, but every command is required to have a Motorcycle Safety Representative (MSR) who can assist you. You should meet your MSR during your check-in process. If you cannot find the MSR, or your command does not have one, inform your Command Master Chief (CMC) of your intent to ride, and request assistance.

You can find and register for classes on www.navymotorcyclerider.com.

You will be asked to answer a questionnaire and then given access to the training search page. You will be looking for Training Registration/Enroll in a class/Traffic Safety Classes.

In Section 1 of the registration page you must Select Training; first time riders are look for Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) Basic Rider Course (BRC).

In Section 2 you will be asked for a location; If you do not know your region, ask someone in your command.

In Section 3 select the month you would like to attend training, select Search and you will bind a list of installations and dates for the training. Pick the one you would like to attend and register.

If you are in the reserves or recruiter, you may have to attend the training in your state sponsored program, usually at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or local Community College. The training is the same, but there may be a cost involved. Your chain of command can advise you on cost assistance if available. Reserves or Recruiters, on orders to a military installation for training, will be given priority for attendance and use of a trainer motorcycle². It is your responsibility to provide course completion information to your command MSR for entry into the Navy ESAMS, or Marine MCTFS³ database. These databases are the official record of your training compliance and the information will be available wherever you are assigned.

¹ The Department of the Navy makes every effort to fully fund **required** motorcycle training, but there are notable exceptions where it is your responsibility to absorb the cost. Some of these include: Prerequisite on-line course

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with a fee. Courses you choose to attend while on leave. Course you attend to expedite receiving your motorcycle endorsement or license. Court assigned motorcycle safety training. Course that you attend for endorsement/licensing at a remote duty location where attendance prior to assignment was required.

² Reserve personnel must coordinate with the installation, well in advance, for priority class assignment and use of a trainer motorcycle (where available). If there is a sufficient number of drilling reservists requiring the motorcycle training, the MSR or drill coordinators may request special classes from the installation.

³ Enterprise Safety Applications Management System (ESAMS) accessible at: www.navymotorcyclerider.com
Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS): generally accessible through the pay or personnel office.

The Department of the Navy respects your right to ride and does not unjustifiably mandate motorcycle safety training and personal protective equipment (PPE). These requirements are established to protect you as a valuable investment and important readiness component. **Riding a motorcycle is statistically one of the most dangerous activities that you will be involved in.** Motorcycle requirements help to reduce your risks of injury in a mishap, and the training provides you with the knowledge and skills every rider must have to handle their motorcycle in the hostile roadway environments. Training is not a substitute for experience, but it does provide a survivable starting level of skill and awareness. Untrained riders are 30 times more likely to be involved in a serious mishap, so you should willingly attend motorcycle training for self-preservation. Those of you, who avoid this training for any reason, should keep in mind that **non-compliance is a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice** and you can be held accountable.

Detailed information regarding motorcycle safety requirements and training can be found in the instruction: OPNAVINST 5100.12J (Navy), or MCO 5100.19F (Marine Corps).

THE BASIC RIDER COURSE:

The first riding course required of you by the Department of the Navy is nationally recognized.

At most installations this course is the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) Basic Rider Course which is referred to as the BRC. MSF is a close partner with the Department of the Navy and many state motorcycle training and licensing programs as well.

The current edition of the BRC was field-tested and proven to be successful in developing the entry-level skills for riding in traffic. Through its various iterations, more than seven million riders have attended a BRC since 1974. In addition to meeting Dept. of the Navy requirements, satisfactory completion of the BRC can help you get a motorcycle license/endorsement in 45 of the 50 states and several countries around the globe.

Do not be intimidated or afraid to take the BRC!!! The course is designed to be enjoyable as well as educational. The BRC is progressive in nature, and conducted at a pace that results in successful completion for most novice riders. Students do not compete with anyone else in this course. Each rider is enabled to focus on their own learning and experience without intimidation. Course instructors are called Rider Coaches. They will provide you with an experience very different from most training that you have ever attended. You will be guided through classroom and riding sessions by the Rider Coach. Interactive activities encourage participation and helps facilitate classroom learning. On the range, you

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will be coached in a way that will help you develop handling and maneuvering skills at a challenging but reasonable pace for YOU!

The BRC takes approximately 16 hours. It may be conducted over two or three days depending on the location and time of year. If the location where you will be attending the BRC provides “training motorcycles” for you to use, you must notify them in advance that you will need one of those assets. In many cases you may use your own motorcycle. It is not true that using your own bike puts you at a disadvantage for passing the course. Quite the opposite is true. Using your bike for the BRC is an excellent way to understand the characteristics of your own machine in a safe controlled environment. Since the course is progressive in nature, you gradually gain confidence as the exercises increase in difficulty. Since the rider coaches are experience riders in their own right, they are aware of the unique characteristics and limitations of personally owned motorcycles regardless of size, configuration or age. On some exercises you may be given leeway on your own bike, as long as you learn the skill of the exercise.

The course is generally not canceled because of weather. If there is rain, dress appropriately.

Can you fail the BRC? Yes, however, the overall success rate is well over 95%.

There is a written test and a riding skills exam. You must pass both to successfully complete the course. Many people have a fear of testing, but in this course, you cover the material sufficiently enough to significantly reduce that intimidation. Most students are extremely confident by test time. Failures occur for various reasons such as: difficulty coordinating controls, poor balance, insufficient physical strength to handle bike weight or controls, bike doesn’t fit the rider, overconfident riders not building foundation skills and not able to progress into more challenging skills. Not everyone is capable or should ride a motorcycle. Many riders fail because they determine, on their own, that riding isn’t for them. The BRC is the best place to make this discovery, not after you have already purchased a motorcycle.

With remedial assistance, students have an opportunity to retake the exam or skills test that they failed. Riders who complete remedial assistance or attend the BRC a second time almost always pass.

Millions of inexperienced riders have successfully completed the BRC. While motorcycling is a skill of the eyes and the mind, as well as the body, the skills can be taught, reinforced through training, and positively evaluated. It is suggested that you preview the BRC Handbook prior to class, so you know what to expect. You can find that and other material on motorcycling by visiting: www.msf-usa.org

Motorcycle License or Endorsements:

Every state and country requires a motorcycle license or endorsement to your motor vehicle driver’s license before you can ride on public roads. Some states required a motorcycle permit for a minimum period of time before you can obtain a license or endorsement. Each state has its own unique set of rules and requirements. Some states require regular renewal, while others waiver renewal until you leave the service. It is up to you to contact **your** local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to understand and satisfy those requirements.

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If you will be traveling overseas and you intend to ride a motorcycle, it is imperative that you attend the BRC and be issued your motorcycle license/endorsement before you leave the US. In most countries you cannot ride your motorcycle unless you have a State-side license/endorsement first. It is vital that you contact your overseas sponsor or command for specific details for driving or riding any vehicle overseas.

Registration:

You are required to register your motorcycle with a state before riding it on public roadways. You may register it in your home state, but you may be able to register it in the state where you are stationed or where you purchased the bike. Know the laws where you register your vehicle. In some cases you may be charged additional taxes or you may have more stringent inspection requirements. Contact the DMV for information that applies.

Registration requirements overseas vary dramatically. Some countries will accept US registration while others require their own registration and/or inspections. You may be able to ship vehicles that do not meet country requirements, but you may not be able to ride it off of the military base, or it might fail customs inspection and be returned stateside at YOUR EXPENSE! It is vital that you contact your overseas sponsor or command and meet specific requirements prior to shipping any vehicle overseas. Some overseas restrictions include: engine size, fuel type, vehicle age, emissions level, sound level, color, motorcycle modifications and more.

Most Department of Defense installations no longer require special decals to enter the base, but almost all require registration in a vehicle data base. This can usually be done through a visit at the facility "pass and ID", personnel office or security office. Some installations will register the vehicle at the gate if the owner has a CAC card. Installations and Military services vary. Some installations require that the Riders present their BRC card as well as registration papers. **DO NOT LOSE YOUR BRC CARD**, and always take it with you when registering a motorcycle on an installation where required.

Motorcycle Insurance:

You are required to have at least liability insurance to ride your motorcycle even if your state does not require it. Liability insurance only pays for damage or injuries to other vehicles or people involved in a crash that you may have caused. **Liability insurance does not cover any damage or injury to your bike, you or your passenger!!!!** Even if you are an excellent rider, liability insurance is generally inadequate for riders. Keep in mind that even with "comprehensive insurance", **your passenger may not be covered without additional coverage.** Make sure that you can afford the "deductible" if you get cheaper insurance with a very high deductible. Some states have "no fault" laws which may mean that you or your insurance company must pay for your own damage or injuries, and you may be expected to pay the deductible even though the crash was not your fault.

Know what your insurance cost will be before you purchase a motorcycle!!! Your age, sex, driving record, type of bike, engine size, and vehicle age all determine the cost of your insurance. You may be able to afford the bike, but not the required insurance unless you purchase a different bike.

Many insurance companies also offer discount for motorcycle training.

Talk to your insurance company/advisor for details.

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Motorcycle Mentor:

Your command should have a motorcycle mentor program or riding group. You may not be interested in attending group rides or functions, but get a mentor and/or talk to the group anyway. They can help you get your license, buy the right bike, wear the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), stay clear of unscrupulous dealers, help you through training and more.

Before you purchase a bike you can see the different bikes available from owners who can point out the pros and cons and not a dealer who is only interested in making a sale.

Military riders take care of each other on bikes and in the command. If you are a new rider take advantage of the years of experience that the group will have. If you are an experienced rider, there is always more to learn and sharing your experiences can help your fellow riders.

Contact your MSR or Command Master Chief and get involved.

In Conclusion:

Riding a motorcycle is nothing like driving a car. Motorcycles require special skills to handle, demand much more risk awareness in traffic, provide very little protection in a crash, and expose you to the elements and road hazards you don't even think about in a car. Motorcycle training provides you with a sound foundation of knowledge and skill before you ride. In some cases it may even change your mind about riding.

**NO MATTER WHAT YOU RIDER, OR HOW LONG YOU HAVE BEEN RIDING,
MOTORCYCLE TRAINING CAN PROVIDE TOOLS THAT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE
IF YOU ATTEND AND PRACTICE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.**

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New Rider Check List

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Notify command that you ride or intend to ride
- ☐ Contact command Motorcycle Safety Representative (MSR)
- ☐ Get registered in ESAMS rider training database (if applicable: required for USN)
- ☐ Schedule BRC Training (request trainer bike or plan to use your own bike)
- ☐ Get a command motorcycle mentor (MSR or CMC will assign)
- ☐ Get the schedule for command riding group meetings/training (MSR, CMC or group members can provide)
- ☐ Obtain proper PPE (DOT helmet, goggles or face shield, full finger gloves, over-the-ankle boots, jacket, long pants)

GETTING A MOTORCYCLE LICENSE/ENDORSEMENT

- ☐ Take eye and written exam (state DMV)
- ☐ Purchase "riding permit" (state DMV)
- ☐ Satisfactorily complete the BRC (Where scheduled)
- ☐ Laminate BRC card and safeguard
- ☐ Obtain motorcycle license/endorsement (state DMV)

OBTAIN YOUR MOTORCYCLE

- ☐ Get insurance quotes for types of insurance and bikes
- ☐ Decide on new or used purchase
- ☐ Decide on dealer or owner purchase
- ☐ Know budget: Get bank loan pre-approval or have the cash
- ☐ Decide on type of bike: sport, non-sport, scooter, trike
- ☐ Purchase bike
- ☐ Have bike, serviced, repaired or inspected as necessary
- ☐ Have licensed rider help you get the bike to your residence if you are not yet licensed.

ONCE BIKE IS PURCHASED

- ☐ Activate insurance (provide VIN to company)
- ☐ Obtain registration from DMV (May need copy of BRC card or command letter)
- ☐ Register with home installation (Pass & ID Take: BRC card, endorsed license, proof of insurance, proof of vehicle inspection, vehicle registration)
- ☐ Become familiar with motorcycle cautiously (consider BRC-2)